



# MEDIA RELEASE

STATE OF TENNESSEE  
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **TAX SEASON PAYING OFF FOR CHILDREN IN NEED OF SUPPORT** *STATE CLAIMS MILLIONS OF DOLLARS FROM PARENTS WHO WON'T PAY*

NASHVILLE, Tenn.— The federal Income Tax Refund Offset program is paying off for thousands of Tennessee children. The Department of Human Services has intercepted 20,000 tax refunds totaling more than \$26 million so far this year. Those numbers are expected to double in coming weeks, as non-paying parents file their income tax returns. The state works with several federal agencies, including the IRS, to intercept tax refunds from parents who owe, but are not paying their child support. Any parent who owes more than \$500 on his or her child support case is subject to the federal Income Tax Refund Offset program.

"It's just incredible that some parents expect to get a refund check from the federal government when their children have gone without support for months, and even years," said DHS Commissioner Gina Lodge. "The tax intercept program makes it easy for the state to help children whose parents are not helping them. We're especially pleased to see the increase in number of returns and dollars collected for the children and families who need them."

The number of tax refunds the state is intercepting has more than doubled in just two years, and the amount of money has also risen dramatically--up from \$15.7 million in 2006 to \$26.4 million so far this year. While the average intercepted check amount is \$1,200, the state has claimed refunds as high as \$18,000. The program has been in effect since 1981.

Congress recently closed a loophole in the law that prevented states from intercepting IRS refunds after a child turned 18-years old. This has allowed many more refunds to be distributed to the families who struggled through the years, waiting for child support that never came or came sporadically.

DHS is expected to collect another \$20 million in coming months when the federal rebate checks are sent out to Tennessee households. The Department of Human Services continues to see increases in its child support collections overall. More than \$350 million in child support has been collected so far this state fiscal year. There are currently 267,000 child support cases under order in Tennessee.

For more information on the Tennessee Child Support Program, visit:  
<http://www.state.tn.us/humanserv/child-support.htm>

For more information on Federal Offset Programs, visit:  
<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cse/newhire/fop/fop.htm>

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